Wichita Eagle

NYE IN THE CATSKILLS.

HE DATES HIS LETTER FROM "THE HORNET'S NEST."

[Not Because That Is the Name of the Place Where He Is Stopping, but Because It Sounds Well—Some Incidents of Mountain Life.

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THE HORNET'S NEST,
ON THE BROW OF THE CATSKILLS,
Aug. 30, 1890.

My letter is dated from the Hornet's Nest, not because that is the name of the place where I am, but because it sounds better to attach some rugged, sylvan epithet to it. I once decided to visit an acquaintance who had named his place The Elms. I went partly because his invitation was evidently so hollow and insincere that to punish him severely I went.

He had The Elms worked on his clothes, and embossed on his stationery,

ON A LOAD OF HAY.

and blown in his glass, and it pained him to eat his victuals from linen that didn't have The Elms emblazoned on it. He told me to come and surprise him any time, and shoot in his preserves and stay till business compelled me to come to town again. He had no doubt heard that I never surprised any one, and never went away from home very much, and so thought it would be safe. Therefore I went. I just went to teach him a valuable lesson. When I go to visit a man for a week he is certainly going away a better man, or else punishment is of no avail, and the chastening rod entirely useless in his case.

The Elms was a misnomer. It should have been called The Shagbark or The Doodle Bug's Lair. It was supposed to mean a wide sweep of meadow, a vine covered lodge, a broad velvet lawn and a carriage way, where the drowsy locust, in the sensuous shadow of magnanimous elms, gnawed a file at intervals through the day, while back of all this the mossy and gray whiskered front and corrugated brow of the venerable architectural pile stood off and admired itself in the deep and glassy pool at its base.

In the first place none of the yeomanry for eight miles knew that he called his old, malarial tank The Elms, so it was hard to find. But when I described the looks of the lord of The Elms they wank at each other and wag-ged their heads and said, "Oh hell, yes, we know him," or words that were still even less euphonious than that.

When I got there he was down cellar sprouting potatoes, and his wife was hanging out upon the clothes line a pair of gathered summer trousers that were evidently made for a man who had been badly mangled in a saw mill.

The Elms was not even picturesque, and the preserves were out of order. I was received with the same cordiality which you detect on the face of any other kind of detected liar. He wanted to be regarded as a remarkable host and landed proprietor without being really hospitable. I remained there at The Elms for two days, rubbing rock salt and Cayenne pepper into the wounds of my host, and suggesting different names for his home, such as The Tom Tit's Eyrie, The Weeping Willow, The Crook Neck Squash and The Muskrat's Retreat. Then I came away. His old look of apprehensive cordiality did not leave him until he had seen me climb on a load of hay with my trunk and start for home.

So when I put a May-Agnes-Fleming name on any place I may be at, when I write a piece for the paper, it is mostly done to be mischievous.

The Catskills are full of people this summer, and I presume there is a larger population of "boarders," as we are called indiscriminately, than ever before; for the number of available points to which the victims of humidity and poor plumbing may retreat in summer time is constantly on the increase, while, so far as I know, all the private and public boarding places are filled to their utmost capacity. This means a good deal when one considers the great area of country called the Catskills. Everywhere the gaudy boarder in flannels and ecru shoes looms upon the green lawn or the brown dirt road, or scales the mountain today and stays in bed the following week, rubbing James B. Pond's Extract on his swollen joints.

I scaled Mount Utsayantha a short time ago in company with others. We picked out a nice hot day, and selecting the most erect wall of the mountain, facing west, we scaled it in such a way that it will not have to be done again till new scales grow out on it.

Mount Utsayantha is 3,365 feet above sea level, and has a brow which reminds me of mine. It is broad, massive and bleak. The foot of the mountain is more massive, however. From the top of the mountain one gets a view of six or seven states with a good glass, I was told. Possibly there were that many in sight, though at this season of the year states look so much alike that it takes an expert to pick them out readily. When states are moulting it is all I can do to tell Vermont from Massachusetts. One gets a nice view from this mountain and highly exhilarating birch beer.

Albany can be distinctly seen with a glass—a field glass, I mean, not a glass of birch beer. Some claim that the nub of Governor Hill's boom may be seen protruding from the state house with the nude vision. Others say they can see the Green mountains, and as far south as the eye can reach. We took two hours and a half for the ascent of the mountain, and came down in about twenty minutes. We descended ungracefully—the way the Irishman claimed that the toad walked, viz., "git up and sit down."

Mount Utsayantha—I use the accepted orthography as found in the Blackhawk dictionary—has a legend also. Many centuries ago this beautiful valley was infested by the red brother and his bronze progeny. Where now the red and blue blazer goes shimmering through the swaying maples, and the girl with her other dress on and her straw colored canvas cinch knocketh the croquet ball gayly west, once there dwelt an old chief whom we will call Polka Dot, the pride of his people. He looked somewhat like William Maxwell Evarts, but was a heavier set man. Places where old Polka Dot sat down and accumulated rest for himself are still shown to city people whose faith was not overworked while young.

Old Polka Dot was a firm man, with double teeth all around, and his prowess got into the personal columns of the papers every little while. He had a daughter named Utsayantha, which means "a messenger sent hastily for treasure," so I am told, or possibly old Polka Dot meant to imply "one sent off for cash."

This idea is my own, and possibly of little value.

Anyhow Utsayantha grew to be quite comely, as Indian women go. I never saw one yet that couldn't stop an ordinary planet by looking at it steadily for two minutes. She dressed simply, wearing the same clothes while tooling cross country before breakfast that she wore at the scalp dance the evening before. In summer time she shellacked herself and visited the poor. Taking a little box of water colors in a shawl strap, so that she could change her clothes whenever she felt like it, she would go away and be gone for a fortnight at a time, visiting the ultra fashionable people of her tribe.

Finally a white man penetrated this region. He did it by asking the brakeman on the West Shore road how to get here and then doing differently. In that way he had no trouble at all. He saw Utsayantha and loved her almost instantly. She was shucking a muskrat at the time, and he could not but admire her deftness and skill. From that moment he could not drive her image from his heart. He sought her again and again to tell her of his passion, but she would jump the fence and flee like a frightened fawn with a split stick on its tail, if such a comparison may be permitted. At last he won her, and married her quietly in his working clothes. The nearest justice of the peace was then in England, and so rather than wait he was married informally to Utsayantha by repeating to her with great solemnity the following stanza:

Ena mena mina mo,
Catch a nigger by the toe;
When he hollers let him go.
O-U-T spells out.

While this had no special bearing on the case it awed Utsayantha, and she went home very much impressed, indeed. That fall a little russet baby came to bless their union. The blessing was all he had with him when he was discovered.

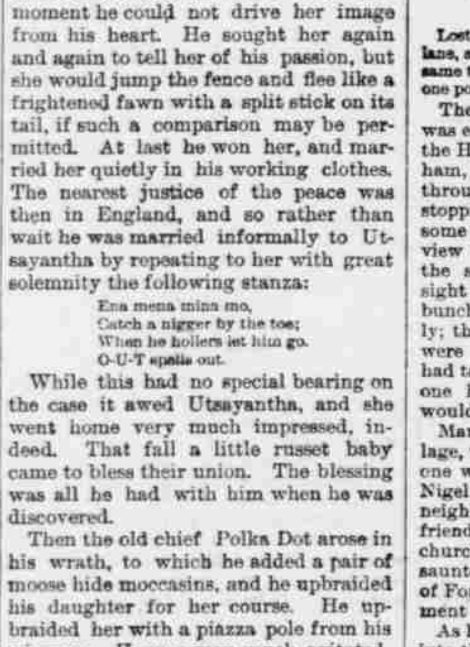
Then the old chief Polka Dot arose in his wrath, to which he added a pair of moose hide moccasins, and he upbraided his daughter for her course. He upbraided her with a piazza pole from his wigwam. He was very much agitated. So was the pole.

Then he cursed her for being the mother of a ½ breed child, and stalking ith he slew the white man by cutting open his trunk and disarranging his reins. He then wiped the stab knife in his tossing mane, and grabbing his grandson by his swaddling clothes he hurled the surprised little stranger into Lake Utsayantha. By pouring another pailful of water into the lake the child was drowned successfully.

Then the widowed and childless Utsayantha came forth as night settled down upon the beautiful valley and the day died peacefully on the mountain tops. Her eyes were red with weeping, and her breath was punctuated with sobs. Putting on a pair of high rubber boots she waded out into the middle of the lake, where there is quite a deep place, and drowned herself.

This should teach us never to kill a son-in-law without getting his wife's consent.

When the old man found the body of his daughter he was considerably mortified. He took her to the top of the mountain and buried her there, and



SCALING THE MOUNTAINS.

ever afterward, it is said, whenever any spoke of the death of his daughter and her family, he would color up and change the subject.

Stamford, at the base of this mountain, is a five hours' ride from Weehawken, and according to my notion is the ideal mountain resort. God has done much for Stamford, and Dr. Churchill has encouraged nature in a good many ways. It is a neat, handsome village, with just enough civilization to soothe existence and teach us to pay for what we get. We often find spots where nature has broken the record in getting together the elements of health and beauty, but man, poor, weak, measly man, gets in there, and robs and holds up and knocks down and drags out his fellow till the angels turn away and weep on each other's shoulders. Just as the meanest and most pestiferous flea bitten and soul scarred man of the community generally marries the most angelic girl in the school, and uses her mostly to start a row of graves with, in each of which he deposits a new and choice wife every two or three years, so unprincipled men with greedy eyes often flock to the beautiful sites for thriving towns, and there cling upon the corporation like big red caterpillars till one by one its fountains dry up and the dead leaves in the parks fall upon the moss grown and sodden paths beneath. At last, old and flabby, with nothing to feed upon but the slimy reminiscences of successful obstructionism and swift decay, they cling about the cracker barrel and sour cider of the last mercantile relic of the place, and brag over the grave of their perished possibilities, and cackle with devilish mirth over the money "they have saved the town."

Stamford, by some singular accident, has fallen into good hands. That is why the same people have been coming here summer after summer for sixteen or eighteen years. That is why the place is a thrifty little eighteen karat ornament to the already beautiful brow of nature. That is why the comfortable homes and hotels overflow with happy, hungry and contented guests, and it is why their children's children for many generations will flee from the loud smelling pandemonium of disemboweled and fetid Broadway to breathe the atmosphere of clover scented fields, and forget the hot anguish of the feverish, selfish, hustling, pelt peeling town in the hospitable homes of Stamford.

This is not a page from a forthcoming guide book to the Catskills, but the sincere sentiments of a plain boarder who pays every week and leaves a mighty small margin for his landlady. I speak thus of Stamford because I would have thanked any good friend to tell me the same thing a year ago, and thus saved me much tiresome and expensive search.

Bill Nye

A MOOD.

The wind exultant swept
Through the new leaves overhead,
Till at once my pulses leapt
With a life I thought long dead,
And I woke, as one who has slept,
To my childhood, that had not fled.

On the wind my spirit flew;
Its freedom was mine as well;
For a moment the world was new;
What came there to break the spell?
The wind still freshly blew;
My spirit it was that fell.

—Winifred Howells.

A BUNCH OF KEYS.

Lost—On Thursday evening, probably in Church lane, a bunch of keys. Whoever will bring the same to Willow cottage, Marchlands, shall receive one pound reward.

The above notice, printed in large type, was exhibited in several of the shops in the High street, in the little town of Foreham, and as Nigel Greenly sauntered through the place one sunny afternoon, stopping here and there, now to look at some fishing tackle, then to glance at a view of Marchlands' church displayed in the stationer's bow window, he caught sight of the announcement concerning the bunch of keys. But he read it unheedingly; the lost keys and the reward offered were nothing to him. Still, however, he had taken into his mind the fact that some one had dropped a bunch of keys and would be very glad to find them.

Marchlands is a small, picturesque village, with as beautiful an old church as one would desire to find anywhere; and Nigel Greenly, who was staying in the neighborhood, had walked over from his friend's house expressly to see Marchlands' church. Thus it came to pass that he had sauntered through the quiet country town of Foreham, and had read the advertisement which heads this story.

As he left Foreham behind him, and got into the footpath leading toward the village for which he was making, he fell into a sad reverie, as he generally did now when he was alone, and his reverie ended, as it ever did, with a deep drawn sigh.

"Hi, young sir! The horse 'ull be upon you if so be you don't move out of the path!"

Nigel started at this warning, and perceived a bulky cart horse, led by a countryman, rounding the road which he was taking. The horse jogged on while Nigel stood still, debating with himself which way to go, and as he looked up and down his eyes lighted on something which glistened on the grassy path, and a moment after he picked up a bunch of keys.

"The keys about which that notice I read was posted up. How provoking! Now I must take them to the owner, which may impose a walk on me and consume the time I meant for exploring Willow cottage. I wish I had not such a knack of remembering an address when once I have heard or seen it."

Thus thinking he twirled the keys around, eying them with considerable disfavor, and in so doing he noticed that one of the many keys hanging to the seal ring which held them together was of gold. Suddenly his face flushed, and he began to examine the small gold key.

It was elaborately chased, and something or other connected with it plainly caused him a considerable amount of agitation.

"Good heavens!" muttered he, "to find it here! Can there be two such keys? No, No!"

Without hesitating a moment longer he dashed on through the woodland before him.

"Which is Willow cottage?" asked he of the first person he met, and his voice betrayed his agitation.

"Straight on till ye gets to the fust stile, and then go to the left, sir. 'Tis that slate colored house with the clump o' willows behind it."

"And who lives there? Do you know?" continued Nigel.

"A widow lady, sir, o' the name o' Grey; a quiet sort o' body, with two grown up daughters."

"Grey! Then I must be mistaken; her name was not Grey," murmured the young man when his informant passed on.

Again, however, he examined the article he had found, and once more his agitation returned.

"Still, I must be mistaken!" repeated he to himself.

With one more searching glance at the glittering thing which had awakened bygone memories he turned toward the willows, and an instant later was inquiring of the neat parlor maid who answered his summons "if Mrs. Grey was at home."

"Yes, sir. Will you please walk this way?"

And he was ushered into a pretty room, where a lady, dressed in slight mourning, was seated at a writing table.

One glance convinced him that she was quite a stranger to him as she rose to greet him.

"Permit me to ask," he began courteously, "whether these are the keys which, I presume, you have lost? I found them on the way here from Foreham," and at the same time he produced the bunch and held them toward the lady.

"A friend of mine who is staying with me lost some keys. Yes; those are the ones that were lost. Oh, how much obliged to you I am!" replied she, with evident satisfaction, examining them meantime attentively.

Had not her gaze been directed to the keys she must have observed Nigel's renewed agitation.

"A friend of yours?" he faltered. "May I ask who? What is her name?"

"Her name!" responded the lady, looking up with a smile. "It is not a lady, but a gentleman who lost the keys."

"A gentleman!" stammered Nigel, and by this time his listener began to perceive that there was something connected with the bunch of keys which raised some memories not altogether free from pain.

"I am sure my friend would like to thank you himself for your kindness in bringing back his property," she said. "Will you sit down? He has only walked up to the ruins with my daughters."

"You are very kind," replied Nigel, his heart beating unevenly as he accepted Mrs. Grey's offer.

Then, as strangers are wont to do when they are thrown together, and civility obliges them to make some effort at conversation, several commonplace remarks were exchanged between the lady and gentleman, while Nigel's pulses were throbbing and the question mentally recurring, "Who is this man who owns her key?"

He had hardly waited a quarter of an hour when footsteps and laughter announced the return of the Misses Grey and their visitor.

"Here they are," said Mrs. Grey.

The door was thrown open, and two young ladies entered, followed by a very handsome young man.

"Hugh," exclaimed the lady of the house, turning to the newcomer, "this gentleman has kindly brought you your keys. He found them in walking from Foreham."

"How fortunate! I deed I am much indebted to you," said Mrs. Grey's visitor.

Nigel had sent a piercing look in the direction of the young man, but at once saw that he was unknown to him. There was no excuse for lingering any longer, but he could not go till he had determined something which tore him with bitterest agony.

"You will tell me—I hope," faltered he, "how this key came into your possession?" and he indicated the bright line of gold hanging amid the steel.

"Oh, that one!" replied the young man carelessly. "That isn't mine, as a matter of fact, though I hardly suppose I shall ever have an opportunity of restoring it to its owner."

"Where—where did you find it?" cried Nigel, now in uncontrollable agitation—so keen that it communicated itself in part to his hearers.

"I picked it up on board ship last year when I went over to America for an autumn trip," answered the other. "It belonged to a young lady—one of the passengers—and—and"——

"You and she are engaged?" interrupted Nigel, in a voice scarcely audible from the emotion of the speaker.

"No; we are strangers," the young man hastened to say. "I have never been able to restore the key (which I recognized as hers from having often observed it hanging from her watch chain) because pressing business, coupled with the severe illness of a near relative who had journeyed out without me, prevented my tracing this lady immediately. Afterward it was too late; she and her mother had left the hotel to which I found they had gone on landing, and so I placed the key on my own ring. Suppose I now transfer it to your keeping?"

Nigel had sat down again. The revulsion of feeling had been too strong for him after believing that his lost love was eternally divided from him—that she must be betrothed to the handsome young man who possessed her key. Once, three years ago, he and she had been on the eve of making their vows together at the altar, when all at once, through his own foolish jealousy, this bright vision of happiness had vanished. Evelyn—his Evie—had been terrified by his too exacting demands that she should see no one, think of no one, when in his presence, and a quarrel, all of his making, had ensued. Glancing back he could perceive his error, his folly, his harshness—now when it was indeed too late. Such undue proportions had his jealousy taken that he had imagined Evelyn cared not for him, but his wealth, and he had made one unguarded exclamation to this effect. One only, but it was enough far the high-souled, loving girl who had promised to be his bride.

Next day she sent back all his gifts, with three brief lines:

This time yesterday nothing but death could have forced me from you; now nothing but death can reunite us.
EVELYN MORE.

Nigel had flown up to town before this brief farewell arrived, intending to drown his misery in rushing hither and thither; saying to himself (poor foolish fellow) that Evelyn would repent her obstinacy about that fellow Hartford (the acquaintance who had aroused his jealousy), and undertake not to speak to him again when they met. Why, if she loved him, was she not ready to promise anything?

He reckoned without his host. On again reaching home—ten days after he quitted it—Evelyn was no longer in the neighborhood. "She had gone to visit an uncle," was the reply to his inquiries at the house.

Gone! And he had found that short and dreadful farewell awaiting!

Distracted now at the idea that perchance he might not so easily persuade Evelyn to pardon him (he had no answer to the one brief letter he had written to her) he eagerly inquired her present whereabouts, and learned, with increasing agony, that Evelyn's mother had seized on a most unexpected offer, had let her house furnished to a friend, and that Evelyn had accompanied her mother and uncle abroad.

Whither? That was his cry—a cry still unanswered.

It was a long time before Mrs. More's friend, who had taken the house off her hand, could be prevailed on to give him Miss More's address, and it was also very long before an answer came to the impassioned appeal he wrote to his wounded betrothed. It was an answer which threw him into a new agony of pain and induced a fever which had threatened his life.

Evelyn's mother and Evelyn herself wrote:

It was impossible after what had occurred that Miss More could ever again subject herself to like suspicions. Her engagement with Mr. Greenly was definitely at an end.

And after this he, too, had tried to forget. How vainly he felt with added force in this most bitter hour as with swiftest speed all that we have recorded here shot through his tortured brain.

When he had received that terrible dismissal from Evelyn her mother's note was dated from Vienna, but now he learned (through the medium of the golden key) that last year she had landed in America. He would follow her there! Ah! long ago would he have done so had she not hidden herself from him. Had he not scoured Italy, Switzerland and Germany in a vain hope of some day falling at her feet and uttering two words—"Forgive me!"

Tottering to his feet Nigel managed to retire from the Willows without breaking down before these strangers, and he carried with him the small gold key. Would it ever be the means of unlocking that door which seemed forever closed against him?

A fortnight later, hoping against hope, he landed in New York and began his inquiries.

Would he ever discover her whom he sought? How, indeed, should he do so in this wide city? Was she even here? And so he wrote an imploring appeal to the lady who three years since had become Mrs. More's tenant.

A stranger replied after the lapse of many days. Miss More was on the point of returning home, as she wished to die in England. Her address was briefly added.

To die! to die! Nigel flew to the hotel where Evelyn was located, and was about to stammer out an agonized question when he met a fair, tall, sad looking girl entering the wide doorway. It was Evelyn—once his Evelyn—his own dear betrothed! Changed indeed! No bright smiles wreathed her lips; no merriment sparkled in her lovely eyes; she looked, indeed, as if happiness and she had long parted company; but she was here—before his longing eyes, and she was not dying!

At sight of him Evelyn uttered one cry, then fell insensible in his arms.

* * * * * * *

Reader, they were married a month later, and Nigel learned, as his unspeakable comfort and joy, that it was not his Evelyn who was expected to die, but another Miss More, her aunt, who had been staying with them in the same hotel, and whom they had gone to America to see.

The little gold key, which had been the means of reuniting the estranged young couple, is treasured equally by both, and Evelyn often, even now, covers it with tears and kisses. As for Nigel he is entirely cured of his tendency to jealousy, and there is not a happier couple than Mr. and Mrs. Nigel Greenly.—True Flag.

Believed Part of It.

Will—A peculiar thing happened to me the other night.

Bill—What was it?

Will—I was asleep, and the stopping of my clock woke me up.

Bill—The stopping of your clock?

Will—Yes. Don't you believe it?

Bill—Oh, yes; I believe the clock stopped.—Yankee Blade.

A Close Friend.

Dumpsey—I say, Blobson, who is the closest personal friend you have in the world?

Blobson—Shycash. He is so close that I have never succeeded in borrowing a red cent from him.—Burlington Free Press.

Where They Were Thickest.

McFingle—Blowhard must have been a brave soldier to judge from his own words. He says that in every battle he was where the bullets were thickest.

McFangle—So he was. He drove an ammunition wagon!—Lawrence American.

For the Benefit of the Ghost.

Tombstone Maker—Look here, you have done a very poor job of spelling in this sentiment you want engraved on your uncle's tombstone.

"I know; I did it on purpose. My uncle was a very illiterate man."—Epoch.

The Greater Includes the Less.

Pedestrian—Will you kindly tell me, sir, what place this is?

Native—This is Chicago.

Pedestrian—Ah, yes! Thank you; and now could you tell me if I am anywhere near the state of Illinois?—Life.

Tit for Tat!

Riding in the street car the other day I saw an interesting scene. An elderly lady asked the conductor for a transfer check.

"Where do you wish to go?" he inquired.

"That's none of your business, sir," was her indignant answer.

The conductor quietly punched a check for Chelsea, and taking her eight cents passed along. Soon he came through the car again, and the elderly lady, who had been studying the check intently, pulled his sleeve and asked:

"Conductor, where will this take me?"

His reply was prompt and justifiable: "That, madam, is my business!"—Boston Globe.

In His Mother's Arms.

"I was in arms all through the war, and I want a pension."

"You! You are not over 28 years of age."

"I know it. I belonged to the infantry."—New York Herald.

A Fashionable Garden Seat.

Our readers are doubtless familiar with the ordinary wicker work garden seats so convenient and enjoyable during the warm season. Being very light these seats can

UPHOLSTERED GARDEN SEAT.

be moved around and placed in any desired position and are invaluable for invalids.

Our cut shows a pretty English addition to the garden seat, consisting of a frame work with loose cover of striped ticking which can be easily removed and affords protection from sun and wind. The seat is of stout basket work, stained and varnished, with a loose cushion of waterproof canvas.